

Parent Information Network

Transition Information Sheets

Transition Point 6: High School to Adult Life

Transition: The Next Step

Transition is movement or change without interruption. It should be a smooth flow from one place or condition to another. While the transition plan for a student receiving special education services is designed to prepare him or her for life after high school, transition can start when a child enters preschool. The sixth transition point is from high school to adult life.

Factors of Change

To facilitate a student's movement through the high school years, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that a transition plan, addressing *integrated courses of study*, must be developed for students with disabilities, by age 14.

By age 16, a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) must contain information on the types of transition *services* that are needed by the student to promote movement toward the postschool activities he or she is interested in pursuing.

As a student prepares to leave high school, the transition plan, developed as part of his/her IEP, should be the guide to start the journey of "life after high school."

Some concerns and issues will need to be considered in developing the transition services component of the IEP. The response to questions, along with assessments of interests, aptitudes, skills, and temperament, will determine the approach or direction of a student's transition.

Postsecondary education - Will the student continue his/her education? Will the education take place in a college/university, a community college, a vocational training school, over the Internet, or on-the-job?

Employment/career - What careers or jobs has the student been able to explore? Will the student require a sheltered workshop environment, supported employment, or be able to function in competitive employment?

Vocational training - Will the student attend a vocational, technical, or trade school to learn the skills needed to pursue his or her chosen career? How will the student pay to attend the school?

Continuing adult education - Does the student want to take self-improvement

classes at a community college or recreation center? Is the student in need of support to complete a General Educational Development (GED) Test?

Community participation - Has the student explored services in the community, e.g., public transportation, libraries, recreation, and leisure activities? Registering to vote, obtaining a driver's license, and registering for selective service may need to be considered.

Independent living - Where will the student live after exiting high school? What kinds of support will be needed to allow the student to live independently, if that is his/her choice?

Adult services - Will the student need services from a social service agency? Will supplemental security income (SSI) be necessary to assure the individual's well being? How will health care insurance be provided?

It is with these questions in mind that the transition plan addresses eight areas for concentration during the high school years: instruction, related services, assistive technology needs, community experiences, employment objectives, adult living, daily living skills, and a functional vocational evaluation.

Ages and Stages: High School to Adult Life

Some students with disabilities who graduate from high school do so with the class with which they entered, taking the traditional four years to finish high school. However, many students benefit from a five-, six-, and even seven-year program in which to complete their studies. As a result, students graduating from high school do so at ages varying between 17 and 21. Some students age-out, meaning they exit high school at the time of their twenty-second birthday or at the end of that school year, whichever the school district will permit. Under the provisions of the IDEA, a student is eligible for special education services if he/she requires special accommodations in order to benefit from his/her education program, through age 21

Making the Transition Smoother

For a student who wants to pursue postsecondary education, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 may be the means to ensure success. It defines a qualified individual with disabilities as "...a person with a disability who meets the academic and technical standards requisite for admission to, or participation in, the college's education program or activity." A college, university, or vocational institute may request documentation of a student's disability before providing requested academic adjustments or auxiliary aids.

For students seeking entrance to a college or university, tests such as the Scholastic Assessment Tests (SAT) or the American College Testing (ACT) must be taken. Students may request accommodations in testing format or equipment to compensate for their disability. High school counselors or a test development company, listed

below, can assist with the process.

Students who will enter the work force may be eligible for services from agencies such as the Division of Developmental Disabilities, the Social Security Administration, or the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Agencies outside the school system should participate in the development of a student's transition plan.

Additional information and assistance with transition planning may be obtained from school personnel, disability-specific organizations, an education program specialist with the Arizona Department of Education's Exceptional Student Services office, or from organizations listed below.

References

Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services. (2000). *Individual Education Program: Guidelines for School-Based Practice in Arizona*. Phoenix, AZ: Author

Arizona Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services, Parent Information Network. (2002). *Beyond high school: Exploring college and university options for students with disabilities*. Phoenix, AZ: Author

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities. (1999). *Transition planning: A team effort*. Washington, DC: Author

Resources

Barclay, J. & Cobb, J. (2001). *Full life ahead: A workbook and guide to adult life for students & families of students with Disabilities*. Montgomery, AL: Southeast Regional Resource Center

PACER Center. (1996). *Transition trek* (a board game). Minneapolis, MN: Author

PACER Center. (2002). *Becoming the mentor, advocate, and guide your young adult needs*. (2002). Minneapolis, MN: Author

Organizations

American College Testing, Special Testing - 61, ACT Universal Testing, P.O. Box 4028, Iowa City, IA 52243-4028, 319-337-1332 or 319-337-1701 (TDD), www.act.org

Arizona Department of Economic Security, Rehabilitation Services Administration, 1789 W. Jefferson, St., Phoenix, AZ 85007, www.de.state.az.us/rsa
Region 1, Maricopa County 602-266-6752
Region 2, Southeast Arizona 520-628-6810
Region 3, Northern Arizona 928-779-4147
Region 4, Central and Southwest Arizona 602-266-6752

Arizona Department of Education, 1535 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85007
Career and Technical Education, 602-542-5353, www.ade.az.gov/cte/AZCrn

Exceptional Student Services, www.ade.az.gov/ess

Flagstaff 928-226-0946

Phoenix 602-364-4000 or 800-352-4558

Tucson 520-628-6330

Council for Exceptional Children, 1110 N. Glebe Rd., Ste. 300, Arlington, VA, 888-232-7733 or 703- 620-3660, www.cec.sped.org

HEATH Resource Center, 2121 K St. NW, Ste. 220, Washington, DC 20037, Tel/TTY 800-544-3284 or 202-973-0904, www.heath.gwu.edu

Learning Disabilities Association of America, 4156 Library Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15234-1349, 412-341-1515, www.LDAAmerica.org

Scholastic Aptitude Test, SAT Services for Students with Disabilities, P.O. Box 6226, Princeton, NJ 08541-6226, 609-771-7137, www.collegeboard.org

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